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DO PARTICIPANTS IN COUNSELING, CLINICAL, AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DIFFER IN THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE.

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DO PARTICIPANTS IN COUNSELING, CLINICAL, AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DIFFER IN THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE?[1]

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Abstract

176 graduate students in counseling psychology, clinical psychology, and vocational rehabilitation counseling programs were studied to determine their philosophies of human nature. Concurrently 70 program directors indicated what they wanted their students to believe. On PHN scales, the students tended to have a neutral although slightly favorable attitude toward other persons and to endorse complexity and variability. Analysis of variance indicated no significant effect of program affiliation. On an Aspirations Inventory, the program directors generally preferred that their students held a moderate, neutral view of human nature, but disagreed by program about individual differences. It was concluded that by and large participants in these mental health subspecialties do share common ground in their beliefs about man.

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DO PARTICIPANTS IN COUNSELING, CLINICAL, AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS DIFFER IN THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE?

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In the continuing debates over the relationship between clinical and counseling psychology and between psychology and rehabilitation counseling, it is sometimes implied that a particular speciality has a distinctive belief system about human nature. For instance, on the basis of a recent summary (Cottle, 1967) of responses by selected Division 17 members one might speculate that counseling psychologists would stress trustworthiness in others, rationality, and variability; allegedly more manipulative clinicians might emphasize the complexity of their clients. However, Chin and Fletcher (Chin, 1967) have suggested that counseling and clinical psychology, desirably, are moving toward greater similarity in the light of new social forces. In contrast, Oleshansky and Hart (1967) are disturbed because rehabilitation counseling programs are too psychological and theoretical, ignoring the day-to-day helping (altruistic) needs of the agencies which employ counselors. In fact, differences in the language of subprofessional education, derived from medical or educational models, may reflect differences in views about man. Clinical "directors" "supervise" "trainees"; some "counseling" faculty think of themselves as "coordinating" and "educating" "graduate students."

A related issue concerns differences in viewpoint between faculty and students within graduate programs. It would not be surprising if these differences included divergent opinions about human nature. Witness the pressure in graduate departments

for more "humanism" as expressed by students in conferences, position papers, and a dialogue at the 1967 APA convention in Washington.

The beliefs under consideration here are assumptions about human nature. It has been claimed that one's beliefs about the characteristics present in people in general--or "philosophies of human nature"--are important determinants of the ways one deals with other people. Wrightsman (1964b, 1965, 1966, 1968) has shown that philosophies of human nature are related to a variety of behaviors: The extent to which S trusts another person in a two-person game, undergraduate ratings of instructors, effectiveness in counseling practicum, and critical attitudes toward supervisors.

In this research graduate students in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and rehabilitation counseling throughout the country were studied to determine their philosophies of human nature. Concurrently, their program directors were asked to indicate what they wanted their students to believe about human nature. Two types of comparisons could then be made--these between participants in the different specialities and those between educators and students. It was hypothesized that of the three groups the students and faculty in rehabilitation counseling would possess the most favorable beliefs about human nature and those in clinical psychology the least favorable. It was further hypothesized that students would tend to be positive in their opinions about others, while faculty members would prefer that their students maintain a neutral position. Those hypotheses were based on the available literature and on rather inexplicit impressions of the type of student who enters each specialization.

Method

Subjects

Educators. Directors of graduate programs in clinical psychology, counseling

psychology, and rehabilitation counseling were requested by mail to answer a brief questionnaire regarding their aspirations for their students. The names of 67 directors of clinical programs and 26 directors of counseling programs were drawn from the 1965-66 official list of APA approved programs. A memorandum from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration provided the names of 33 directors of rehabilitation counseling programs.

Of the 126 graduate directors, 70 (56%) returned usable questionnaires. There were 33 in clinical, 11 in counseling, and 26 in rehabilitation counseling. (Although irrelevant to our purposes, the meaning of the significantly larger proportion of rehabilitation counselor educators who responded to the survey provokes an aside. Are rehabilitation program directors more cooperative because of their assumptions about the nature of people who send out questionnaires?)

Students. The directors of the graduate programs were also requested to ask three of their students, "selected at random," to complete the Philosophies of Human Nature Scale and mail it directly to the authors. Each student was promised (and later received) an interpretive report of his scores. The 176 students who submitted PHN scales included representatives from more than half of the 126 different programs throughout the country whose directors were solicited. There were 132 males and 44 females. Median age was 26, and median graduate class was second year.

The student subjects were classified into four groups on the basis of expressed occupational intention: clinical psychologist, 66; counseling psychologist (including college counselor, counseling and guidance specialist, counselor educator), 31; rehabilitation counselor, 45; and other (professor, teacher, psychologist, research, etc.), 34.

Instruments

Philosophies of Human Nature Scale (Wrightsman, 1964a). This 84-item Likert-

type attitude inventory yields subscale scores indicating beliefs about six dimensions of human nature--Trustworthiness, Strength of Will, Altruism, Independence from Group Pressures, Simplicity-Complexity, and Similarity-Variability. The first four subscales can be summed to derive a General Favorability score, and the Complexity and Variability subscales can also be summed to provide a Multiplexity score.

Each subscale has a range of -42 to +42. Positive scores on the first four subscales indicate favorable beliefs about human nature; on Complexity, beliefs that people are complex and hard to understand, and on Variability, beliefs that they are different from one another. Negative scores indicate unfavorable beliefs about human nature, beliefs that people are simple and easy to understand, and beliefs that most people are similar in their psychological makeup. Scores between -14 and +14 are interpreted as indicating neutral positions on the belief continua. Evidence concerning reliability and construct validity of the PHN as well as norms for a variety of groups will be found in Wrightsman (1964a; Wrightsman & Satterfield, 1967).

Aspirations Inventory. Eight items, designed to be completed by the educators, were written for this research. Of these, six paralleled the Philosophies of Human Nature subscales; one tapped aspirations in respect to man's goodness; and another man's rationality. Each item included 5-7 options representing the positive, negative, and neutral positions on the PHN, plus opportunity for open-end comment if desired. The inventory was introduced in a letter which included the general statement that "we are particularly interested in your beliefs about desriable goals in the education of psychologists and related specialists." The items in preliminary form were pretested and criticized by several colleagues.

Analysis

The significance of differences between the four student groups on the PHN

(six subscales and two summed scales) was tested by analysis of variance, and as a further test of the meaning of the differences, a multiple discriminant analysis was done (Cooley and Lohnes, 1962).

Chi square was applied to each of the eight items of the Aspirations Inventory to test the significance of the difference between the three graduate educator groups in responding to the options.

Results

Students. The means and standard deviations on the PHN for the four categories of graduate students are presented in Table 1. All mean scores for the groups were positive, but most of the means fell within the neutral range. The beliefs of each group on the four substantive dimensions were more favorable than those of college undergraduates previously reported by Wrightsman (Wrightsman & Satterfield, 1967). Their average scores on Complexity and Variability did not differ from those of the heterogeneous undergraduate group.

Insert Table 1 about here.

On the substantive dimensions (Trustworthiness, Strength of Will, Altruism, and Independence) the rehabilitation students tended to have slightly more favorable beliefs about human nature than did the other groups. However, an analysis of variance (Table 2) yielded no significant differences among student groups on any of the six subscales or the two summed scales. Likewise, the lack of significant

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Insert Table 2 about here.

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interaction indicated that the profile of mean scores was rather similar from one student category to another. The only significant effect was the subscale variable. That is, on certain subscales the means across categories of subjects were significantly different from the means on other subscales.

As a further test of the meaning of the differences, a multiple discriminant analysis was completed, following the procedures specified by Cooley and Lohnes (1962). Three vectors were extracted by which the differences between groups could be described, but only Vector 1 was of importance, as it accounted for 79.81% of the trace components. On Vector 1, the Trustworthiness and Variability subscales contributed the most to the difference between groups. A group centroid analysis indicated that the Rehabilitation and Other categories were the farthest apart, thus contributing the most to the scale differences noted above. It is concluded from this that the clinical and the counseling trainee groups were more nearly alike in their beliefs than were any other possible combinations, but this conclusion is tempered by the weak significance level of the vector analysis.

Educators. The most popular responses of the educators to the Aspirations Inventory are summarized in Table 3. In general, the educators wanted their students to believe that human nature is neither favorable nor unfavorable. Approximately half the educators endorsed the position for their students that some people are quite trustworthy, some untrustworthy, some neither; that most people are neither selfish, nor unselfish; that some people can do much through will power, some not; and that people are neither basically good nor basically bad. More than two-thirds hoped that their students would believe that people are sometimes aware and sometimes not aware of their motivations; and that some are able to stick with their beliefs under pressure and some not.

Insert Table 3 about here.

In regard to individual differences, the majority of educators preferred that their students believe that people are complex and hard to understand, although some of the educators would modify this to say "Believe that people are complex but that they can be understood." Most educators preferred a belief that people are partly similar and partly different.

The faculty members did not differ significantly by groups on seven of the eight items of the Aspirations Inventory. When the differences in the distributions among options between clinical, counseling, and rehabilitation educators were tested with χ^2, only on Variability did the groups differ significantly. A Substantial minority of the rehabilitation educators hoped that trainees would believe that people are basically similar in their psychological makeup, but a number of the counseling psychologists endorsed the opposite view. Although for each of the other seven items options were combined by inspection on the basis of logic and popularity and retested, no other differences were found between the educators which attained significance. However, in some instances trends were provocative. For example, 70% of the clinical directors, as compared with 45% of the counseling directors and 31% of the rehabilitation counseling directors, wanted their students to believe that human nature is complex and hard to understand. Proportionately more of the rehabilitation educators than the clinicians and counseling psychologists endorsed trustworthiness and the basic goodness of man.

Because of the relatively small number of counseling psychologists, separate analyses were also made comparing the responses of rehabilitation counseling directors with those of the clinical directors and with those of clinical and counseling educators combined. Once again, the obtained chi-square values did not attain

significance except on Variability.

Discussion

We have found that a sample of graduate students across the country in clinical, counseling psychology, and vocational rehabilitation tended to have a neutral although slightly favorable attitude toward other persons and to endorse complexity and variability. Their program directors generally preferred that students hold a moderate, neutral view of human nature, but disagreed with one another on individual differences. Table 4 attempts to synthesize our results.

Insert Table 4 about here.

Educators vs. students

Discussion of the educators' beliefs about human nautre must, of course, be tempered by the realization that the Aspirations Inventory was somewhat crude and was not directly calibrated with the PHN. However, as hypothesized the graduate students did indeed seem to be slightly more optimistic about the nature of man than the aspirations of their educators for them. Both students and faculty agreed that man is complex and hard to understand, but seemed to have less accord in respect to his variability. Within each of the three programs the students appeared to put greater stress on the differences between people than the faculty.

It seems to us that even though the gap between students and faculty was not incredible, such discrepancies as this study suggests need to be confirmed, explored through discussion, and, if possible, resolved. One training director wrote us that beliefs about human nature had nothing to do with doctoral training! However, the investigators (two faculty members and one student) agree that there is a

place for the analysis of philosophies of human nature in graduate and professional education in psychology.

Clinical vs. Counseling vs. Rehabilitation

Perhaps the most striking finding in this research was that by and large participants in clinical, counseling, and vocational rehabilitation programs do share common ground in their beliefs about men. The graduate students did not differ by subspecialty on the PHN. Only on Variability did their directors disagree markedly. At the same time, where differences were identified or suggestive trends noted, they offered some confirmation to the speculations presented in our introduction. Students and faculty in vocational rehabilitation were slightly more inclined than those in other subspecialties toward favorable interpersonal attitudes. Substantiating Cottle, clinical training directors on the Aspirations Inventory favored Complexity. Substantiating Chin, graduate students in clinical and counseling psychology had rather similar profiles on the PHN. Counseling psychologists, who have long been identified with the study of individual differences, stressed variability in man. Educators in rehabilitation, who are concerned with prejudice against the disabled, emphasized similarity.

Comparisons now in progress among participants within other specialties are yielding further, provocative results about philosophies of human nature. For instance, students in experimental psychology tend to have an unfavorable view of man on the PHN (Wrightsman & Satterfield, 1967). The means for school counselors enrolled in NDEA institutes reflect highly favorable beliefs about human nature.

Finally, the PHN may prove to be useful in understanding the social psychology of various professions involved with human behavior, in appraising the effects of educational or professional experiences, perhaps in reconciling divergent approaches to therapy, or in improving interdisciplinary relationships.

Table 1

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Philosophies of Human Nature Subscales for Four Groups of Students

PHN Scale		Graduate Students			
		Clin. Psych. (N=66)	Couns. Psych. (N=31)	Rehab. Coun. (N=45)	Other Psych. (N=34)
Trustworthiness	Mean	5.42	7.45	9.33	5.56
	S.D.	11.55	10.15	12.21	13.72
Willpower	Mean	11.60	10.68	10.64	11.91
	S.D.	9.73	9.91	10.14	10.24
Altruism	Mean	1.50	3.61	4.22	1.94
	S.D.	11.64	10.63	13.72	12.27
Independence	Mean	0.45	2.06	1.98	0.41
	S.D.	11.84	12.08	9.66	12.59
Complexity	Mean	8.79	12.58	10.78	10.82
	S.D.	11.04	10.35	9.21	9.94
Variability	Mean	10.88	10.84	15.98	10.62
	S.D.	8.71	8.59	10.27	12.06

Note:--Possible range on each scale is from +42 to -42. Positive scores (<+14) indicate a strong belief that human nature is consistent with the title of the scale. Negative scores (>-14) indicate the opposite belief. Scores in the range +14 to -14 are considered a neutral opinion.

Table 2

Summary--Analysis of Variance for Four Graduate Student Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F Ratio	P Value
Student groups	2907.73	3	969.24	1.24	N.S.
Subscales & scales	77574.34	7	11082.04	48.79	.001
Interaction-groups & scales	2041.97	21	97.24	0.43	N.S.
Error between groups	134068.87	172	779.47	-	-
Error within groups	273438.69	1204	227.11	-	-

Table 3

Aspirations of Educators for Their Graduate Students

Item	Most Popular Options ". . . I hope that the typical graduate of our program believes that . . ."	Program		
		Clinical (N=33)	Counseling (N=11)	Rehabilitation (N=26)
Trustworthiness	Some people are quite trustworthy; some are quite untrustworthy; some are neither.	52%	55%	38%
	Most people are trustworthy, honest, moral, responsible.	12	18	42
Willpower	Some people can do much through willpower alone; some cannot.	55	64	65
Altruism	Some people are selfish; some are unselfish.	46	64	58
Independence	Some people are able to stick to their beliefs in the face of group pressures to the contrary; some are not.	76	82	92
Complexity	People are complex and hard to understand.	70	45	31

Table 3 (continued)

Aspirations of Educators for Their Graduate Students

Item	Most Popular Options ". . . I hope that the typical graduate of our program believes that . . ."	Program Clinical (N=33)	Counseling (N=11)	Rehabilitation (N=26)
Variability[1]	People are partly similar but partly different in their psychological makeup.	70%	55%	54%
	People are basically similar in their psychological makeup.	3	-	42
	People are basically different in their psychological makeup.	15	36	4
Goodness	People are basically good.	15	27	35
	People are neither basically good nor basically bad.	64	45	54
Awareness	People are sometimes aware of their true motives, sometimes not.	73	73	89

Note:--Criteria for selection of option for inclusion in this table--popularity exceeded 33 percent in one or more program.

[1]When four neutral categories were combined, $X^2=23.59$, df=4, $p<.01$.

Table 4

Philosophies of Human Nature—Modal Aspirations of Educators and Mean Responses of Their Students

Philosophy	Group	Program		
		Clinical	Counseling	Rehabilitation
Trustworthiness	Educators:	Neutral	Neutral	Trustworthy
	Students:	Neutral	Neutral to trustworthy	Trustworthy to neutral
Willpower	Educators:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Students:	Rational	Rational	Rational
Altruism	Educators:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Students:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Independence	Educators:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Students:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Complexity	Educators:	Complex	Complex to neutral	Complex to neutral
	Students:	Complex to neutral	Complex	Complex
Variability	Educators:	Neutral	Neutral to variable	Neutral to similar
	Students:	Variable to neutral	Variable to neutral	Variable

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